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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the extent to which five Japanese indirectness strategies, used to make indirect requests, transfer to situations in which Japanese learners of English make indirect requests in English. The effects of language proficiency on this transferability were also examined. Subjects were 37 Japanese learners of English as a Second Language (ESL), divided into two groups (high and low) based on English proficiency. They were administered a questionnaire presenting four situations designed to elicit requests. After each situation, five different requests were presented, to be rated by the subjects according to their acceptability. The situations were offered first in Japanese, then in English. Subjects' responses were analyzed for evidence of transfer of strategy from Japanese to English. Results show that contextual factors played a major role in determining transferability at the pragmatic level, and some proficiency effects on transferability of those request strategies were also identified. Contains 44 references. (Author/MSE)

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Transferability of L1 Indirect Request Strategies to L2 Contexts

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This study is intended to examine the transferability of five indirectness strategies realized by the conventions of usage of Japanese indirect requests when Japanese learners of English realize English indirect requests in four situations. Subjects representing two proficiency groups were asked to undertake the acceptability judgment task for five indirect request expressions in Japanese and English, respectively, for each situation. The transferability rate was computed for each indirectness strategy for each situation by subtracting the acceptability rate of the English indirect request from the acceptability rate of the corresponding Japanese indirect request. The results clearly indicated that contextual factors played a major role in determining transferabilities at the pragmatic level. Furthermore, some proficiency effects on the transferabilities of those indirect request strategies were identified.

INTRODUCTION

A central concern of transferability studies has been to determine how, why, and when L1 features can be transferred to an L2 (see Andersen, 1983; Eckman, 1977; Gass, 1979; Jordens, 1977; Kellerman, 1977, 1978, 1979a; Zobl, 1980; and others). Much of the research on transferability, however, has revolved around the investigation of syntactic, lexical, and semantic features. Little attention has been paid to transferability as it relates to pragmatics. Rather, what has interested interlanguages (IL) pragmatics researchers is detecting the fact of pragmatic transfer as a possible source of miscommunication, without seriously examining

the conditions or process of pragmatic transfer (see Beebe et al., 1990; Olshtain, 1983; Wolfson, 1989, Ch. 7; and others).

The current study is intended to examine transferability at the pragmatic level. Specifically, an effort is invested here in clarifying the nature of transferability observed in L2 production requiring pragmatic competence. First, however, it is necessary to review how SLA researchers have been dealing with the notion of transferability. Subsequently, another attempt will be made to examine to what extent the notion of transferability has been explored in the area of IL pragmatics.

On the Notion of Transferability

In order to define 'transferability,' a number of criteria have been suggested. Based on the Markedness Differential Hypothesis (MDH), Eckman (1977) proposed **typological markedness** as a transferability criterion. According to Eckman, the more typical and unmarked the structures are, the more likely they will be transferred, thereby connecting transfer with universality.

Universality was also suggested as a transferability criterion by Gass (1979). She argued that "the likelihood of the transferability of linguistic phenomena must take into account **both** target language facts and rules of universal grammar" (p. 343). Specifically, Gass suggested for the area of syntax that transferability is mainly determined by the following three conditions, which interact with language universals: (1) surface structures in L1 correspond to those in L2; (2) the TL and the transferred patterns manifest a high degree of perceptual salience; and (3) the transferred pattern has a less elliptical structure than the corresponding TL pattern.

By placing more emphasis on L2 structural properties than L1, Zobl (1980) argued for **selectivity of transfer**, proposing various formal and developmental criteria for the selective nature of L1 influence. According to Zobl, L2 learners must attain a certain level of development in L2 structures before transfer is activated. Furthermore, transfer is selective on the formal axis which is "defined in terms of systems and structures of the L2 that differ along such dimensions as stability (verb types), consistency (word order), and innovativeness (question types) in that L2's learner-language" (Zobl, 1980, p. 54). Andersen (1983) reformulated Zobl's claim, proposing the **transfer to somewhere principle**. According to this principle, consistent transfer takes place "**if and only if** there already exists within the L2 input the potential for (mis-)generalization from the input to produce the same form or structure" (p. 178) (though one could argue that ***existence in the L2*** input may not necessarily be an essential condition).

The above transferability criteria were formulated on the basis of linguistically established concepts. Hence, as Faerch and Kasper (1987) pointed out, a problem inherent in the above criteria is that they may not be ***psychologically real*** for L2 learners in their process of transfer. In order to solve this problem, some SLA researchers have made attempts to establish ***psycholinguistic*** criteria for transferability. Among them are Kellerman and Jordens.

Kellerman (1977, 1978/87, 1979a, 1986) conducted a series of experiments by focusing primarily on the transferability of lexis. Kellerman defined the transferability of a structure as "the probability with which it will be transferred to an L2 compared to some other structure or structures" (1986, p. 36). Unlike Zobl (1980) and Andersen (1983), he claimed that transferability can be established solely based upon L1-specific features independent of the L2. Three criteria of transferability were proposed by Kellerman: (1) psycholinguistic markedness, (2) the reasonable entity principle (REP); and (3) psychotypology (Kellerman, 1983).

Psycholinguistic markedness refers to the perception of a feature described as "infrequent, irregular, semantically or structurally opaque, or in any other way exceptional" (Kellerman, 1983, p. 117) and transferability of the feature is defined as inversely proportional to its degree of markedness. Psycholinguistic markedness is a crucial factor in determining whether an L1 feature is perceived as language-specific (and thus non-transferable) or language-neutral (and thus transferable). In his 1977 study, Kellerman set up an experiment to examine how Dutch learners of English at three different proficiency levels would treat Dutch idiomatic expressions translated into English. The learners were asked to judge if the translated English expressions were acceptable in English or not. The results showed that the lowest proficiency group tended to reject Dutch-like idioms (due to their 'language-specific' judgment on Dutch idioms as a result of the perceived greater psycholinguistic markedness of those lexical items). In contrast, the highest proficiency group was more successful at distinguishing correct English idioms similar to Dutch ones from Dutch-based erroneous idioms.

Jordens (1977) and Kellerman (1977) further indicated that *non-transparent* idioms were more often rejected (whether correctly or not) and thus non-transferable than *transparent* ones. Furthermore, Kellerman (1978/87) examined the various senses of a polysemous Dutch word ***breken*** (to break) in English or ***(zer)brechen*** in German for those senses. He concluded that expressions which contained words manifesting a greater core (unmarked) meaning identified along a putative coreness/markedness dimension of a two-dimensional semantic space were more often accepted as translatable expressions. Those expressions were therefore predicted to be transferable (see Kellerman, 1986). (For more on the 'markedness' claim, see Kellerman, 1979a.)

With the **reasonable entity principle** (REP) as another criterion of transferability, Kellerman (1983) claimed that "in the absence of specific knowledge about the L2, learners will strive to maximalize the systematic, the explicit, and the "logical" in their IL" (p. 122). In other words, L2 learners tend to transfer L1 structures which conform to the L2 reasonableness assumption and fail to transfer L1 structures if they do not conform to this assumption.

With regard to the criterion of **psychotypology**, the results of Jordens (1977) are often compared with the results available from Kellerman (1977) in relation to language-specificity/neutrality as evidence for learner's psychotypology or metalingual awareness of language distance. According to Jordens, first-year Dutch learners with low proficiency in German accepted Dutch idiomatic expressions translated into German and failed to distinguish expressions possible in German from those impossible in that language. Second-year learners, however, tended to reject Dutch-like idiomatic expressions in German regardless of their correctness. Third-year learners, on the other hand, were able to begin distinguishing between Dutch idiomatic expressions that were possible and impossible in German. Based on this finding, Jordens assumed that the first-year Dutch learners of German could not distinguish those expressions due to a lesser degree of psychotypological distance between Dutch and German. Those learners considered that the two languages were similar, as opposed to the Dutch learners of English in Kellerman (1977), who perceived a greater psychotypological distance between Dutch and English. (For 'language distance,' see also Ringbom, 1978, 1985.)

We must, however, be cautious in applying Kellerman's transferability criteria to specific L2 learning situations. The judgment of language-specificity/neutrality, reasonableness of L1 structures in a given L2, and language distance may change in accordance with learners' increased experience with the L2 and/or their experience with learning of languages other than the L2 (Faerch & Kasper, 1987; Kellerman, 1983). As a matter of fact, Kellerman (1984) and Sharwood Smith and Kellerman (1989) report some *U-shaped* behaviors observed in learners' transferability judgments according to their proficiency in the target language[1] (see also Jordens, 1977; Kellerman, 1979b).

One major problem of Kellerman's transferability criteria is that no clear-cut explanation has been provided as to the causal relationship (if any) between 'psycholinguistic markedness' and 'psychotypology.' Perceiving an L1 feature as specific or neutral (i.e., psycholinguistically marked or unmarked) might have been greatly influenced by the learner's psychotypology, and the learner's perception of language-specificity/neutrality may have influenced his/her psychotypology. At this stage of transferability research, however, we have very little evidence as to how these two criteria are related to each other, due to lack

of systematic studies on the relationship between the general perception of language-distance and the perceived language-specificity/neutrality of specific linguistic features in various combinations of languages. Yet, in spite of this problem, Kellerman has satisfactorily verified that certain aspects of crosslinguistic influence can be predicted and explained successfully and systematically.

Studies of Pragmatic Transfer

Focusing on five major speech acts--apology, refusal, gratitude, compliment, and request--I will now examine to what extent transferability (by which I specifically mean transferability determined by the constraints of **psycholinguistic markedness**) has been dealt with in the area of pragmatics as well as what findings on transfer are available in this area. Cohen and Olshtain have substantially investigated the transfer phenomena in apology. Olshtain (1983), for instance, attempted to describe nonnative deviations observed in apology performed by native English speakers and native Russian speakers learning Hebrew as L2. The major finding of this study is that the overall highest level of use for apology semantic formulas was attained by English speakers, somewhat lower by Russian speakers, and the lowest by Hebrew speakers. Additionally and more importantly for this review, Olshtain pointed out that speakers of English were found to have a **language-specific** perception concerning the apology speech act in general, whereas speakers of Russian were found to have a more **universal** perception of the apology act. Specifically, she found that English native speakers learning Hebrew tended to perceive spoken Hebrew as permitting fewer apologies due to Hebrew-specific conventions in performing this particular speech act. Russian native speakers learning Hebrew were more likely to assume that people need to apologize according to their feelings of responsibility, regardless of language and culture (see Cohen & Olshtain, 1981; Olshtain & Cohen, 1989).

Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) is one of the few transfer studies on IL refusals. They examined how refusals are carried out by Japanese learners of English. Their findings showed transfer in the order, frequency, and content of refusal strategies as well as in the learners' sensitivity to status (of the refusees). Within the same framework of Beebe et al., Takahashi and Beebe (1987) focused on the effects of learning contexts (ESL vs. EFL) and learners' proficiency on L2 refusals. They found that the EFL group tended to transfer Japanese rules of speaking to a greater extent than the ESL group. Additionally, the hypothesis that a greater amount of transfer will correlate with greater proficiency was not conclusively supported by their data. However, they claimed that there was some evidence in that direction.

Both refusal studies reviewed above only presented the fact of transfer and did not explore **transferability**. However, their hypothesized claim that advanced-level learners have considerable difficulty in performing target speech acts suggests that even highly-proficient learners may rely on their L1 features and transfer them to L2 contexts, thus implying the significance of a study to examine what feature is and is not transferable for those learners.

Based on Eisenstein and Bodman (1986), Bodman and Eisenstein (1988) analyzed the transfer phenomena observed in advanced Arabic-, Farsi-, and Punjabi-speaking learners of English. They found that those learners transferred their NL's ritualized expressions in thanking to their IL responses in written production questionnaires. However, there were few instances of those expressions in spontaneous role plays performed in their L2. According to Bodman and Eisenstein, the learners evinced considerable awkwardness, with many hesitations and pauses, in the face-to-face communicative contexts. Bodman and Eisenstein observed that the learners seemed to realize that they must avoid transferring expressions of gratitude literally from their native languages. This realization led to the learners' hesitation behavior in their role play performance.

Similar findings to those of Bodman and Eisenstein (1988) are reported by Wolfson (1981) in her study on compliments (see also Wolfson, 1989). Based on data gathered from conversations in Arabic and Farsi, advanced Arabic- and Farsi-speaking learners of English avoided direct translation of their NL's proverbs and other ritualized compliment expressions. Those studies, then, clearly supported Kellerman's claims that translations of idiomatic/formulaic expressions unique or specific to a particular language into another language is less likely to be accepted by L2 learners.

In the area of transfer studies of request, House and Kasper (1987) took a **nonuniversalistic** approach by claiming that the learners' decision on transfer is based primarily on L1 language-specificity. They focused on **directness** and **internal/external modifications** exemplified in L2 English indirect requests attempted by native speakers of Danish and German, respectively. They concluded that transfer from learners' NL operates differentially: "the learners avoid transfer of language-specific structures, thus indicating awareness of transferability constraints at the pragmatic level" (p. 1285) (see Faerch & Kasper, 1989).

A transfer study of requests was also attempted by Takahashi and DuFon (1989). They examined whether or not Japanese learners of English transfer L1 indirect request strategies to L2 communicative settings. Following Takahashi (1987), Takahashi and DuFon asked the learners to role play two situations where they ask fictional neighbors (who are older and have higher social status) to do something. Elicited L2 data were then compared with L1 English and L1

Japanese baseline data obtained in Takahashi (1987) and analyzed at three different levels of proficiency: beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Using the indirectness taxonomy developed by Takahashi (1987), data analysis revealed that Japanese ESL learners tended to proceed from less direct to more direct levels in their request choice on a developmental axis. Furthermore, the following findings were obtained: (1) in their attempt to make an explicit reference to a desired action, the learners favored a more direct English request than the American counterparts; and (2) when they decided to refer implicitly to an action to be taken, they relied on hinting strategies, showing preference for a more indirect approach than the Americans. Based on the above findings, Takahashi and DuFon identified a bimodal distribution of L2 indirectness strategies which was also detected in L1 Japanese request performance, but not in L1 English request performance in Takahashi (1987), thus providing evidence of transfer in their study.

Of the two findings entailing the bimodal distribution in Takahashi and DuFon, the first finding is noteworthy. Namely, the Japanese learners of English almost exclusively employed relatively direct strategies when performing English indirect requests intended to refer to the action explicitly. In contrast, the American control group participants (in Takahashi, 1987) favored relatively indirect strategies in making such requests. Those request strategies chosen by the Japanese learners of English and the native speakers of American English were represented by the following four conventions of usage constituting parts of the conventional indirectness level of the taxonomy (see Table 1)[2, 3]:

The requests made by the Japanese learners of English:

'Want' statement: Sentences stating S's (speaker's) wish or want that H (hearer) will do A (action). (e.g., 'I would like you to VP.')

'Willingness' question: Sentences asking H's will, desire, or willingness to do A. (e.g., 'Would you VP?', 'Would you be willing to VP?')

The requests made by the native speakers of American English:

'Mitigated ability' statement: Declarative sentences questioning H's doing A. (e.g., 'I wonder if you could VP.')

'Mitigated expectation' statement: Sentences concerning S's expectation of H's doing A in hypothetical situations. (e.g., 'I would appreciate it if you would VP.')

Why did the Japanese ESL learners prefer the above request strategies? A possible explanation could be that the indirectness strategies represented by the 'Want' statement and the 'Willingness' question are language-neutral and thus were transferred to L2 contexts. A question arises as to whether Japanese indirectness strategies represented by the 'Want' statement and the 'Willingness' question are really treated in that manner. Additionally, what predictions can be made as to other indirect request strategies? Are they equally transferable in those specific situations? In the light of the obtained results of proficiency effects in Takahashi and DuFon, it would also be worthwhile to investigate proficiency effects on the transferabilities of Japanese indirect request strategies to corresponding English request contexts.

On the whole, the studies presented above have centered on identifying transfer phenomena at the pragmatic level rather than exploring transferability of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge. They have not examined systematically what kinds of speech act realization patterns are judged to be language/culture-specific and thus predicted as non-transferable and which are assessed as language/culture-neutral and thus predicted as transferable. In fact, a transferability study of this kind would provide psycholinguistically valid explanations of the bimodal distribution of indirectness strategies reported in Takahashi and DuFon (1989). Hence, systematic studies directly addressing the issue of transferability need to be undertaken.

Table 1

Components of the Conventional Indirectness Level of the Taxonomy in Takahashi (1987)
(from most direct to least direct)

(1) **'Want' statement**: Sentences stating S's (speaker's) wish or want that H (hearer) will do A (action). (e.g., 'I would like you to open the window.')

(2) **'Expectation' statement**: Sentences stating S's expectation of H's doing A. (e.g. 'Would you open the windows? 'You should open the window.')

(3) **'Willingness' question**: Sentences asking H's will, desire, or willingness to do A. (e.g., 'Would you open the window?', 'Would you be willing to open the window?')

(4) **'Ability' question**: Sentences asking H's ability to do A. (e.g., 'Can you open the window?', 'Could you open the window?')

(5) **'Reason' question**: Sentences asking reasons for H's not doing A. (e.g., 'Why don't you open the window?')

(6) **'Permission' question**: Sentences asking H's permission for S's requesting H to do A. (e.g., 'Can I ask you to open the window?')

(7) **'Mitigated ability'** question: Interrogative sentences embedding one of the clauses/gerunds concerning H's doing A. (e.g., 'Do you think that you can open the window?')

(8) **'Mitigated ability'** statement: Declarative sentences questioning H's doing A. (e.g., 'I wonder if you could open the window.')

(9) **'Mitigated expectation' statement**: Sentences concerning S's expectation of H's doing A in hypothetical situations. (e.g., 'I would appreciate it if you would open the window.')

THE STUDY

Purposes of the Study

The aims of the current study are twofold: (1) to examine the transferability of indirectness strategies realized by the conventions of usage (see Morgan, 1978; Searle, 1975) of Japanese indirect requests when Japanese learners of English

realize English indirect requests; and (2) to investigate the effects of language proficiency on transferability (see Sharwood Smith & Kellerman, 1989; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987). This study, then, is expected to answer the question of why the Japanese learners of English in Takahashi and DuFon (1989) favored particular levels of indirectness as noted above.

Hypotheses

Based primarily on the findings of Takahashi and DuFon (1989), the following hypotheses will be tested.

H 1: The Japanese indirectness strategy represented by the 'Want' statement (i.e., Sentence stating S's wish or want that H will do A) is relatively transferable to the corresponding English request context.

H 2: The Japanese indirectness strategy represented by the 'Willingness' question (i.e., Sentence asking H's will, desire, or willingness to do A) is relatively transferable to the corresponding English request context.

H 3: The Japanese indirectness strategy represented by the 'Ability' question (i.e., Sentences asking H's ability to do A) is relatively non-transferable to the corresponding English request context (or not realizable).

H 4: The Japanese indirectness strategy represented by the 'Mitigated ability' statement (i.e., Declarative sentences questioning H's doing A) is relatively non-transferable to the corresponding English request context (or not realizable).

H 5: The Japanese indirectness strategy represented by the 'Mitigated expectation' statement (i.e., Sentences concerning S's expectation of H's doing A in hypothetical situations) is relatively non-transferable to the corresponding English request context (or not realizable).

H 6: There is a difference between Low ESL (beginning/intermediate) and High ESL (highly advanced) learners in terms of their assessments on predicted transferability of indirectness strategies of requests.

Methodology

Subjects

37 female Japanese learners of English as a second language formed the subjects for the current study. In order to compare the results of this study with those of Takahashi and DuFon (1989), the variable of gender was controlled, using female learners only.

For the purpose of investigating the proficiency effect on transferability, the subjects were further divided into two groups based on their English proficiency. 20 subjects belonged to Low ESL Group (TOEFL scores 450 - 540; mean TOEFL score = 502) and 17 subjects were in High ESL Group (TOEFL scores 560 - 650; mean TOEFL score = 607).[4] The Low ESL subjects were enrolled in either Hawaii English Language Program (HELP) or the ESL program at Hawaii Pacific University. The High ESL subjects were graduate students at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. ESL learners whose TOEFL scores were 449 or below were not asked to participate in the present study because the task required a good knowledge of English vocabulary and grammar.

Materials

A questionnaire consisting of two parts (Part I and Part II) was constructed for this study. Each part was comprised of four situations: the 'Flute,' 'Questionnaire,' 'Airport,' and 'Moving Car' situations. All of them had already proved to elicit **requests** in the previous studies. Specifically, of the four, the 'Flute' and 'Questionnaire' situations were adapted from Takahashi (1987) and Takahashi and DuFon (1989) with minor modification. The remaining two situations were taken from a pilot study of Takahashi (1987).

Following Takahashi (1987) and Takahashi and DuFon (1989), all the situations were described so that a female requestor asks a not-so-familiar,[5] older, female neighbor with higher social status to do something (difficult) for her. For all of the situations, attention was duly paid to create a request context which might be encountered in both Japanese and American societies so that unfamiliarity of context would not affect the subjects' acceptability judgment on indirect requests. The situations were described as follows:

'Flute' situation: You ask your female next-door neighbor (in her 50s) to practice the flute a little earlier in the evening because this neighbor has been practicing after ten o'clock at night, which has been disturbing your sleep.[6]

'Questionnaire' situation: You ask your female next-door neighbor (in her 50s) to fill out a questionnaire which she had previously agreed to fill out and return it as soon as possible since your paper is due in four days.

'Airport' situation: You ask your female next-door neighbor (in her 50s) to give you a ride to the airport so that you can catch an early flight.

'Moving Car' situation: You ask your female next-door neighbor (in her 50s) to move her car parked in front of your garage because you have to get your car out to go pick up your friend at the airport.

Each of the four situations was followed by a brief dialogue (two-to-three turns) in which the request was made.

In Part 1, both the situations and the following dialogues were written in Japanese. A dialogue after each situation was further followed by five Japanese sentences which realized the request to be made in the dialogue with five different types of indirectness strategies (intended to refer to the action explicitly). Those five types of request strategies were actually employed by the Japanese subjects in Takahashi (1987) for each requestor-requestee relationship described above. Those five strategies were as follows:

(1) The strategy represented by the 'Want' statement. (e.g., V-site itadaki tai no desu ga (= I would like you to VP.)) (Hereafter, the indirectness strategy of 'I would like.')

(2) The strategy represented by the 'Willingness' question. (e.g., V-site itadake masu (masen) ka (= Would you VP?)) (Hereafter, the indirectness strategy of 'Would you.)

(3) The strategy represented by the 'Ability' question. (e.g., V-rare masu ka / V-site itadaku koto wa dekimasen ka (= Can you VP?)) (Hereafter, the indirectness strategy of 'Can you.')

(4) The strategy represented by the 'Mitigated ability' statement. (e.g., V-site itadake nai ka to omoimasi-te (= I wonder if you could VP.) (Hereafter, the indirectness strategy of 'I wonder.')

(5) The strategy represented by the 'Mitigated expectation' statement. (e.g., V-site itadakeru to arigatai no desu ga (= I would appreciate it if you would VP.))
(Hereafter, the indirectness strategy of 'I appreciate.')

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The above set of five indirectness strategies were provided in each dialogue, using either of the two types of Japanese honorific auxiliary verbs, **itadaku** and **morau**, which differ from each other in politeness (**itadaku** is more polite than **morau**). Based upon the judgment of the researcher (a native Japanese speaker), the appropriate honorific auxiliary verb was selected for each set of the five indirectness strategies for each situation. Specifically, all of the five strategies for the 'Flute,' 'Questionnaire,' and 'Airport' situations were realized by the honorific auxiliary verb **itadaku**; and all of the five strategies for the 'Moving Car' situation was presented using the honorific auxiliary verb **morau**. Hence, the variable of politeness manifested in those two types of auxiliary verbs was controlled in each situation. It should be stressed here that the current research focus was on the **convention of usage** realizing indirectness strategies, not the politeness markers for those strategies.

For each sentence representing a particular indirectness strategy, a five-point scale of acceptability judgment was provided ('5' was the most acceptable, i.e., 'accept' and '1' was the least acceptable, i.e., 'reject'). This rating task was crucial for a transferability study at the pragmatic level since the degree of acceptability differs from one request to another in that particular situation. The presentation order of the five Japanese sentences was counterbalanced across the four situations.

Part II consisted of exactly the same situations and dialogues but, this time, was written in English. Each of the English situations was followed by five English request sentences, which were translation equivalents of the Japanese requests in Part I. For each English request sentence, a five-point scale of acceptability judgment was provided. [Note here that an additional request modification such as a politeness marker, **please**, was avoided. This was because some English requests did not require it, and thus we had to avoid cases where subjects judged the acceptability of the English requests solely on the basis of whether or not a certain modification was supplied.] The presentation order of situations and request strategies in Part II was different from that of Part I.

Design

Following Kellerman (1983), 'transferability' was defined as the probability with which a given L1 indirectness strategy in making requests will be transferred relative to other L1 indirectness strategies. Whether or not a given indirectness strategy is transferable from L1 to L2 was determined by acceptability judgments of both a Japanese (L1) indirect request and the corresponding English (L2) indirect request manifesting the same indirectness strategy as the Japanese one in

a particular request situation. Specifically, if a learner judges a given Japanese indirect request as acceptable in that particular request situation and she considers the corresponding English request strategy as acceptable to the same degree, the L1 request strategy in this situation is said to be transferable to the L2 context. The operational definition of 'transferability' in this study, therefore, was as follows: Transferability is defined as the transferability rate obtained by subtracting the acceptability rate of an English indirect request from the acceptability rate of its Japanese equivalent in a particular situation.

The transferability rate for each request type in each situation for each subject was computed by following the operational definition of transferability provided above. Then, the obtained transferability rate was interpreted in the following manner:

(1) If the transferability rate is closer to 'zero' (e.g., 5 (Jap) - 5 (Eng) = 0), the Japanese request strategy manifests a language-neutral nature and thus is predicted as highly transferable.

(2) If the transferability rate is closer to 'four' (5 (Jap) - 1 (Eng) = 4), the Japanese request strategy manifests an L1-specific nature and thus is predicted as non-transferable.

(3) If the transferability rate is below 'zero' (e.g., 3 (Jap) - 5 (Eng) = -2), the Japanese request strategy is not predicted as transferable. In this case, L2-based language-specificity rather than L1-based language specificity is considered to play a primary role in predicting transferability of a given indirect request strategy.

Whether or not an obtained transferability rate is closer to zero was determined by a one sample t-test (for more details about this statistical procedure, see the data analysis section).

By combining the statistically obtained assessment on transferability with the acceptability rate of a Japanese indirect request and the transferability direction represented by 'plus/minus' values, a more detailed interpretation scheme was formulated. This interpretation scheme was crucial for analyzing pragmatic transferability within the framework of the current study because the claim of 'transferable' or 'non-transferable' solely based on a statistical procedure does not provide a precise picture of transferability in real situations. Four possible sets of interpretation were established as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Interpretation Scheme

Interpretation 1: High acceptability rate for a Japanese request / 'Plus' value for the transferability rate / Statistically non-transferable.

-------> L1-specific nature / Non-transferable from L1 to L2.

Interpretation 2: High acceptability rate for a Japanese request / 'Minus' value for the transferability rate / Statistically non-transferable.

-------> L2-specific nature / Non-transferable from L1 to L2.

Interpretation 3: High acceptability rate for a Japanese request / Statistically transferable (i.e., closer to zero for the transferability rate).

-------> Language-neutral nature / Transferable from L1 to L2.

Interpretation 4: Low acceptability rate for a Japanese request (regardless of statistically obtained transferability judgments).

-------> (Transfer) Non-realizable.

The cut-off point for the Japanese acceptability rate in determining whether the request manifests 'high' or 'low acceptability' was set at 2.5, i.e., the midpoint on a five-point scale. Of special concern was Interpretation 4. Japanese request strategies which did not attain 'high acceptability' were interpreted as non-realizable. A low acceptability rate for a particular Japanese request suggests that the Japanese request is not really conventionalized and thus expected not to be frequently used. It is not probable that people transfer from L1 to L2 a given strategy not conventionalized enough and thus not incorporated into their repertoire of indirectness strategies in their L1. Hence, it does not make sense to provide a transferability judgment for such relatively unacceptable Japanese requests.

Procedure

Subjects were first asked to conduct the acceptability judgment task in Part I. They were told to read a situation and, in relation to this situation, rate the acceptability of each of the following Japanese sentences that manifest a particular type of indirect request strategy or convention of usage of indirect requests.

After completing Part I, the subjects were asked to proceed to Part II. They rated the acceptability of the English translation equivalents of the Japanese request sentences in Part I. Providing subjects with two separate sections (i.e., Part I and Part II) for acceptability judgment tasks was essential. This prevented the acceptability rate of the English request sentence from being influenced by the acceptabilities of the corresponding Japanese request sentence and/or other Japanese request sentences for a particular situation in Part I.

Data Analysis

A **situation-based** data analysis was conducted.[7] For each situation, the following procedures were taken to test each hypothesis:

For Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5:

(1) The mean acceptability rate for each strategy of the Japanese indirect requests was computed in order to assess their appropriateness.

(2) The mean transferability rate for each strategy was computed as a dependent variable. Then, the null hypothesis stating 'transferable' was set out. One sample t-test was performed for each indirectness strategy to determine whether the null hypothesis should be accepted or rejected ($a = 0.05$, two-tailed). The result of 'transferable' was obtained by supporting the null hypothesis and that of 'non-transferable' was available by rejecting this hypothesis.

(3) The final transferability assessment was based on the interpretation scheme outlined above.

For Hypothesis 6:

(1) The procedures taken to test Hypotheses 1-5 above were repeated for Low ESL Group and High ESL Group, respectively.

(2) For each indirectness strategy, the transferability assessment obtained as a result of applying the interpretation scheme was listed for each proficiency group.

(3) Kappa (k), a coefficient of agreement for nominal scales, was computed to determine the degree of agreement between Low ESL Group and High ESL Group with respect to their assessment on predictable transferability of the five indirectness strategies. The null hypothesis of Kappa was set out as follows: There is no agreement between these two proficiency groups in terms of their assessment on predicted transferability of indirectness strategies. This null hypothesis was tested by referring to z score, which is obtained by dividing k by s_{ko} ($a = 0.05$, two-tailed).

Results and Discussion

The results of transferability assessment and those of hypothesis testing for H1 - H5 of each indirectness strategy for each situation are summarized in Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6. Table 7 presents the results of the degrees of agreement on transferability assessment between High ESL and Low ESL Groups for each situation, along with the results of hypothesis testing for H6.

The results obtained for the current study suggest several crucial points regarding the indirectness strategies which might be employed by Japanese learners of English in L2 communicative contexts. From the results related to Hypotheses 1-5, it was found that the five indirectness strategies examined here manifest different transferability constraints on Japanese ESL learners' L2 use. Furthermore, the findings concerning Hypothesis 6 revealed some proficiency effects on the transferabilities of those indirectness strategies. Questions arise as to why those indirectness strategies manifested differences in terms of transferability and why there were some proficiency effects on the transferabilities of those indirectness strategies. In what follows, each indirectness strategy will be scrutinized as for its nature of transferability. Subsequently, further attempts will be made to explore factors yielding the proficiency effects on the transferabilities and to seek the implications for the findings of Takahashi and DuFon (1989).

Table 3
Results of transferability assessment of each indirectness strategy and hypothesis testing for H_1 - H_5 for the 'Flute' situation

Strategies	Mean-Jap. (S.D.)	Mean-Tra. (S.D.)	t value	Trans Asses	Hypo.
I would like	3.757 (.955)	1.189 (1.469)	4.924***	L1 Spec./N-Trans (Non-Trans)	H1 Reject
Would you	3.189 (1.05)	-.027 (1.19)	-.138	L. Neut./Trans (Transferable)	H2 Conf.
Can you	2.108 (.994)	.027 (1.258)	.131	N-Real. (Transferable)	H3 Conf.
I wonder	2.000 (1.225)	-1.432 (1.849)	-4.712***	N-Real. (Non-Trans)	H4 Conf.
Appreciate	4.432 (1.042)	.432 (1.119)	2.351*	L1 Spec./N-Trans (Non-Trans)	H5 Conf

Note. df = 36
* p < .05 *** p < .0001 ( ) = Statistical judgment of transferability

L1 Spec. = L1-specific / L2 Spec. = L2-specific / L. Neut. = language-neutral / N-Real. = Non-realizable / Trans = Transferable / N-Trans = Non-transferable / Hypo. = Hypothesis testing / Conf. = Confirm

Table 4
Results of transferability assessment of each indirectness strategy and hypothesis testing for H_1 - H_5 for the 'Questionnaire' situation

Strategies	Mean-Jap. (S.D.)	Mean-Tra. (S.D)	t value	Trans Asses	Hypo.
I would like	2.541 (.9)	.108 (1.41)	.466	L. Neut./Trans (Transferable)	H1 Conf.
Would you	2.622 (1.255)	-.649 (1.703)	-2.317*	L2 Spec./N-Trans (Non-Trans)	H2 Reject
Can you	2.703 (1.222)	.405 (1.363)	1.809	L. Neut./Trans (Transferable)	H3 Reject
I wonder	3.838 (1.214)	.243 (1.402)	1.055	L. Neut./Trans (Transferable)	H4 Reject
Appreciate	4.027 (1.067)	-.243 (1.09)	-1.357	L. Neut./Trans (Transferable)	H5 Reject

Note. df = 36
* p < .05 ( ) = Statistical judgment of transferability

Table 5
Results of transferability assessment of each indirectness strategy and hypothesis testing for H1 - H5 for the 'Airport' situation

Strategies	Mean-Jap. (S.D.)	Mean-Tra. (S.D.)	t value	Trans.Asses	Hypo.
I would like	3.676 (1.056)	1.297 (1.351)	5.84***	L1 Spec./N-Trans (Non-Trans)	H1 Reject
Would you	3.108 (1.149)	-.459 (1.556)	-1.796	L.Neut./Trans (Transferable)	H2 Conf.
Can you	3.081 (1.341)	.892 (1.612)	3.365*	L1 spec./N-Trans (Non-Trans)	H3 Conf.
I wonder	3.622 (1.089)	.054 (1.353)	.243	L.Neut./Trans (Transferable)	H4 Reject
Appreciate	3.973 (1.067)	-.324 (1.334)	-1.478	L.Neut./Trans (Transferable)	H5 Reject

Note. df = 36
* p < .05 *** p < .0001 ( ) = Statistical judgment of transferability

Table 6
Results of transferability assessment of each indirectness strategy and hypothesis testing for H_1 - H_5 for the 'Moving Car' situation

Strategies	Mean-Jap. (S.D.)	Mean-Tra. (S.D.)	t value	Trans.Asses	Hypo.
I would like	3.583 (.874)	.556 (1.275)	2.615*	L1 Spec./N-Trans (Non-Trans)	H1 Reject
Would you	3.194 (1.142)	-.333 (1.549)	-1.291	L.Neut./Trans (Transferable)	H2 Conf.
Can you	1.833 (1.108)	-.611 (1.337)	-2.743*	N-Real. (Non-Trans)	H3 Conf.
I wonder	3.889 (1.036)	.778 (1.495)	3.122*	L1 Spec./N-Trans (Non-Trans)	H4 Conf.
Appreciate	3.806 (1.261)	.222 (1.376)	.969	L.Neut./Trans (Transferable)	H5 Reject

Note. df = 35 * p < .05 ( ) = Statistical judgment of transferability

Table 7
Results of the degrees of agreement on transferability assessment between Low ESL Group and High ESL Group for each situation and results of hypothesis testing for H_6

		Situations			
Strategies	Prof.	Flute	Questionnaire	Airport	Moving Car
I would like	Low	N-rans (L1-spec.)	Trans (L. Neut.)	N-Trans (L1-spec.)	Trans (L. Neut.)
	High	N-Trans (L-1 spec.)	N-Real.	N-Trans (L1-spec.)	N-Trans (L1-spec.)
Would you	Low	Trans (L. Neut.)	N-Real.	Trans (L. Neut.)	Trans (L. Neut.)
	High	Trans (L. Neut.)	Trans (L. Neut.)	Trans (L. Neut.)	Trans (L. Neut.)
Can you	Low	N-Real.	N-Trans (L1-spec.)	N-Trans (L1-spec.)	N-Real.
	High	N-Real.	N-Real.	Trans (L.Neut.)	N-Real.
I wonder	Low	N-Real.	Trans (L.Neut.)	Trans (L.Neut.)	N-Trans (L1-spec.)
	High	N-Real.	Trans (L. Neut.)	Trans (L. Neut.)	Trans (L. Neut.)
Appreciate	Low	Trans (L. Neut.)	N-Trans (L2-spec.)	Trans (L. Neut.)	Trans (L. Neut.)
	High	N-Trans (L1-spec.)	Trans (L. Neut.)	Trans (L. Neut.)	Trans (L. Neut.)
Agreement		$\kappa = .71$ ($p < .05$)	$\kappa = -.18$	$\kappa = .55$	$\kappa = .29$
Hypothesis Testing		Reject	Confirm	Confirm	Confirm

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Indirectness Strategies and their Transferabilities

Strategy of 'I would like you to do A'. Except for the 'Questionnaire' situation, relatively high mean acceptability rates were obtained for the Japanese indirect requests using the strategy of 'I would like.' In the 'Flute,' 'Airport,' and 'Moving Car' situations, this strategy was found to be non-transferable relative to the other indirectness strategies. In particular, in the 'Flute' and 'Airport' situations, this strategy was found to be relatively non-transferable at the significance level of $p < .0001$ and showed large 'plus' values in transferability ('Flute' = 1.189; 'Airport' = 1.297). Taken together with the obtained high mean acceptability rates for the Japanese requests in those two situations, this strategy in these particular situations can be said to be **highly** L1-specific and **highly** non-transferable.

One explanation of this finding could be that the Japanese requests realized by this strategy do not require the explicit reference to **you** (**anata** in Japanese), as seen in the example 'yuugata, moo sukosi hayame ni (anata ni) renshuu o site itadaki tai no desu ga (= I would like (you) to practice a little earlier in the evening),' and thus are perceived to be less imposing on requestees. In contrast, in English, requestors are required to refer to **you** explicitly. This linguistic requirement of mentioning **you**, as in 'I would like you to practice a little earlier in the evening,' could entail a greater degree of imposition on requestees perceived by Japanese learners of English in those three situations. In fact, Hijirida and Sohn (1986) comment on the different use of the second person pronoun **you** between English and Japanese/Korean as follows: "while 'you' in E (English) can be used to any superior or inferior person, both J (Japanese) and K (Korean) do not have any second person pronoun to refer to a socially superior person. That is, unlike the use of *you* in English ..., J (Japanese) and K (Korean) do not allow a speaker of a lower status to use any of the second person pronouns toward a higher status addressee, except in such marked cases as when fighting" (p. 369, parentheses mine). Therefore, to the learners, the Japanese requests realized by this strategy, which allow the omission of **you**, are perfectly acceptable both socially and psychologically, whereas some sort of hesitation must be felt by the learners in using the strategy of 'I would like' in English by explicitly referring to **you**. Hence, it is reasonable to claim that this strategy in Japanese is psycholinguistically marked as L1-specific and non-transferable to corresponding English contexts.

However, how can we interpret the case of the strategy of 'I would like' in the 'Questionnaire' situation, where the result of 'transferable' was obtained? The

result from Takahashi and DuFon (1989) for this same situation also showed the relatively frequent use of this strategy in English by their Japanese ESL learners. Compared to the other three situations, the 'Questionnaire' situation is marked as **second-time around**, i.e., requesting what was previously asked for. Then, one possible explanation would be that the learners have made up their mind to rely on more aggressive means by explicitly referring to **you** in the English context in order to accomplish what was requested earlier as soon as possible. This is really speculative and thus empirical evidence should be obtained for the above interpretation by examining the relationship between the situational factor (second-time around) and transferability.

Strategy of 'Would you do A?'. In contrast to the indirectness strategy of 'I would like' above, the strategy of 'Would you' was found to be relatively transferable for the following three situations: the 'Flute,' 'Airport,' and 'Moving Car' situations. From this, a complementary distribution is observable between this strategy and the strategy of 'I would like.' That is, where the strategy of 'I would like' was identified as transferable, the strategy of 'Would you' was found to be non-transferable, and vice versa. Again, compared with findings available from Takahashi and DuFon (1989), it seems that the obtained results of transferability in this study correspond to those of their study. Specifically, the Japanese ESL learners in Takahashi and DuFon tended to employ the indirectness strategy of 'Would you' much more often than the strategy of 'I would like' for the 'Violin' situation (i.e., the 'Flute' situation, in the current study); however, the opposite tendency was observed for the 'Questionnaire' situation. The relatively transferable nature of the strategy of 'Would you' in the 'Flute,' 'Airport,' and 'Moving Car' situations and the relatively non-transferable tendency of this strategy (with L2-specificity) observed in the 'Questionnaire' situation might be attributable to contextual factors. Specifically, the request contexts for the 'Flute,' 'Airport,' and 'Moving Car' situations were featured with **first-time around**. For the 'Questionnaire' situation, however, the request was made in the **second-time around** context. This is, again, speculative in nature and more research would be needed to clarify this point.

Strategy of 'Can you do A?'. For the strategy of 'Can you,' the 'non-transferable' assessment was obtained for the 'Airport' situation; and the 'non-realizable' assessment was made for the 'Flute' and 'Moving Car' situations. Regarding the 'Questionnaire' situation, this strategy was found to be transferable. However, we must be cautious in interpreting the nature of transferability for this particular strategy. This is because some researchers claim that there is no

Japanese request which takes the form of asking the requestee's ability/potentiality. Among them is Matsumoto (1988).

Matsumoto (1988) claims that the request in the form of 'Can you do A?' would not normally be perceived as a request in Japanese. This claim may be applicable to the 'Moving Car' situation, in which the relatively low mean acceptability rate (1.833) was obtained for the Japanese indirect request. However, how can we account for the high mean acceptability rate for the Japanese requests in the 'Airport' situation (3.365) (and also the marginally high rate (2.703) for the 'Questionnaire' situation)?

Specifically, the results in this study indicated that the strategy of 'Can you' for the 'Airport' situation was substantially L1 (Japanese)-specific. Regarding the 'Questionnaire' situation, this strategy was found to be transferable; yet, the transferability rate showed a larger 'plus' value (.405) compared to the other two 'plus'-value strategies (i.e., the strategies of 'I would like' (.108) and 'I wonder' (.243)). Hence, this strategy for the 'Questionnaire' situation shows the possibility of learners' psycholinguistically marked perception of this strategy as L1 (Japanese)-specific. The feature shared by the Japanese indirectness strategy for those two situations is that both of them take the form of 'V-site itadaku **koto wa** *dekimas*-en ka?' The **dekimas-** is a free morpheme indicating **potentiality**. Here, compare this form with the request form in the 'Flute' situation. It contains this free morpheme but lacks the phrase **koto wa** (*koto* = a summational epitheme) (e.g., 'Yuugata, moo sukosi hayameni renshuu-*dekimas*-en desho **ka**'). Note that this request form in the 'Flute' situation received a relatively low mean acceptability rate (2.108) (and thus was predicted as non-realizable). Based on this observation, it is plausible to claim that, if a request is made in Japanese using this free morpheme following the phrase, koto wa, the form is totally acceptable and perceived as a request. In this case, however, a more relevant English translation equivalent (in terms of a strategy or a convention of usage) may have been 'Is it possible that you would do A?', rather than 'Can you do A?', which was used in the current study. This suggests that, if the learners had been asked to rate the English request sentence, 'Is it possible that you would do A?', instead of 'Can you do A?', for the 'Airport' situation, in particular, they would have provided a higher acceptability rate for this English request, and thus the 'transferable' assessment would have been obtained for this situation as well.

In contrast, the Japanese indirectness strategy for the 'Moving Car' situation here takes the form of 'Verb-C-**e** masen desho ka? (C = consonant, see Martin, 1975)'. This **e** is a bound morpheme which also indicates potentiality (a potential passive morpheme). 'Can you do A?' is the most relevant English translation equivalent of the question containing this morpheme after a verb. Considering the relatively low mean acceptability rate for the Japanese request for this situation

(1.833), it might be reasonable to claim that the Japanese sentence containing this bound morpheme e is much less likely to be accepted as a request. In fact, Matsumoto's (1988) claim above is made by referring to this type of sentence as an example ('Mot-*e*-masu ka' = 'Can you hold this?'). Hence, it could be assumed that the learners considered this Japanese request used in the 'Moving Car' situation to be inappropriate and thus judged transfer of this strategy from L1 to L2 as non-realizable.

Strategy of 'I wonder if you could do A'. In the 'Questionnaire' and 'Airport' situations, it was found that the strategy of 'I wonder' was highly transferable from Japanese to English as well as highly appropriate as Japanese requests. However, this same strategy for the 'Flute' situation showed a tendency of being non-realizable and that for the 'Moving Car' situation was judged to be non-transferable with L1-specific features. What made the difference between these two groups of situations, i.e., the 'Questionnaire'/'Airport' group and the 'Flute'/'Moving Car' group, in terms of the transferability of this strategy? One possibility would be the different degrees of psychological burden felt by the requestors when confronting the requestees. More specifically, in the case of the 'Questionnaire' and 'Airport' situations, the requestor is required to ask her requestee to do what is not really beneficial to the requestee. In other words, the requests are relatively imposing on the requestees. Hence, the relatively greater degree of psychological burden must be experienced by the requestor. Under these circumstances, then, it seems that the strategy of 'I wonder' is judged to be relatively appropriate both in English and in Japanese. This is because it manifests a relevant degree of mitigation of imposition, as compared to 'I would like,' 'Would you,' and 'Can you.' In short, the psycholinguistically unmarked nature perceived for this strategy yielded the findings of 'transferable' for these two situations.

In contrast, in the 'Flute' and 'Moving Car' situations, the requestor does not have to feel such psychological burden vis-à-vis the requestee. Rather, the request intentions for these two situations connote 'complaining.' It is reasonable to assume, then, that the requestor takes for granted the requestee's accomplishing what is requested. However, it is highly speculative that this contextual factor influences the transferability for these two situations and leads to the obtained results of 'non-realizable' (for the 'Flute' situation) and 'non-transferable' (for the 'Moving Car' situation). Are there any substantial differences between Japanese and English in making requests to cope with the situations like 'Flute' and 'Moving Car' which might explain the 'non-realizable/non-transferable' results? There might be some other factors affecting the transferability of the strategy of 'I wonder' for the 'Flute' and 'Moving Car' situations, respectively. On the

whole, then, further research is needed in order to find out what factors contribute to the results obtained for the transferability of this indirectness strategy.

Strategy of 'I would appreciate it if you would do A'. The strategy of 'I appreciate' was found to be highly transferable for all the situations, except the 'Flute.' With regard to this strategy for the 'Flute' situation, however, the paired t-test showed that there were not statistically significant differences in transferability between the strategy of 'I appreciate' and the strategies of 'Would you' and 'Can you,' both of which were found to be transferable for this particular situation. Hence, it might be reasonable to claim that the strategy of 'I appreciate' for the 'Flute' situation was marginally non-transferable with the L1-specific nature due to the relatively high mean acceptability rate for the Japanese request (4.432). On the whole, for all the situations, the mean acceptability rates for the Japanese requests realized by this strategy were relatively high as compared to those realized by the other strategies in those situations. Taken together with the overall results of 'transferable' tendency of this strategy for those situations, it could be assumed that learners frequently use this strategy for such situations in Japanese as a relatively appropriate conventionalized form of request and are more likely to experience this indirectness strategy as psycholinguistically unmarked (language-neutral).

Proficiency Effects on the Transferability

For the 'Questionnaire,' 'Airport,' and 'Moving Car' situations, Hypothesis 6 was confirmed, evidencing that there was a difference between Low ESL and High ESL learners in terms of their judgments on predicted transferability of indirect request strategies. As a matter of fact, those situations manifest several cases in which the two proficiency groups conflicted with each other regarding their assessments on transferability at a simple bi-polar level, i.e., 'transferable vs. non-transferable (or non-realizable).' This observation is particularly true for the 'Questionnaire' situation: Four out of the five cases (the strategies of 'I would like,' 'Would you,' 'Can you,' and 'I appreciate') showed conflicting predictions.

The 'disagreement' tendency between the two proficiency groups found for the above three situations further revealed that High ESL learners consistently provided 'non-transferable (or non-realizable)' assessments for the strategy of 'I would like' and 'transferable' assessments for the strategies of 'Would you,' 'I wonder,' and 'I appreciate' across the three situations. Low ESL learners did not attain such consistency. Of special concern were the 'transferable' assessments made by High ESL learners for the strategies of 'I wonder' and 'I appreciate.'

Advanced ESL learners' prediction of appropriate request performance in their L2 in those situations was well supported by the real request performance elicited from native American English speakers in Takahashi (1987). As a general finding in Takahashi (1987), native speakers of American English most favored the strategies of 'I wonder' and 'I appreciate' in situations identical with or similar to those employed in the current study. In this sense, we might claim that those advanced learners attained native-like pragmalinguistic competence for these three situations. In contrast, Low ESL learners' prediction of relevant patterns of L2 request realization appeared to be unstable, suggesting that they had not yet achieved a satisfactory degree of pragmalinguistic competence. Based on this observation, it could be claimed that, as far as the 'Questionnaire,' 'Airport,' and 'Moving Car' situations were concerned, proficiency effects were operative in the learners' assessment of pragmatic transferability. [Note that the difference in proficiency or pragmalinguistic competence between High ESL and Low ESL groups here might be attributable to different length of residence (LOR) in the U.S. (the difference between the mean LOR of High ESL Group (51.1 months) and that of Low ESL Group (13.6 months) was found to be significant ($t = -4.71$, $p < .0001$)). Namely, High ESL learners might have had more opportunities to encounter L2 situations similar to the 'Questionnaire,' 'Airport,' and 'Moving Car' situations due to their longer stay in the target-language community and thus succeeded in familiarizing themselves with those situations. This in turn led to attaining more correct judgments on acceptability of indirectness strategies than Low ESL learners (cf. Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986).]

With regard to the 'Flute' situation, however, it was found that there was an agreement tendency between the two proficiency groups ($k = .71$, $p < .05$). Besides, the following finding was obtained: High ESL learners provided the 'non-realizable' assessment for the strategy of 'I wonder' and the 'non-transferable' assessment for the strategy of 'I appreciate.' Since the native speakers of American English in Takahashi (1987) most frequently relied on the strategies of 'I wonder' and 'I appreciate' in their role play performance in the identical situation, it can be claimed that those advanced learners failed to make correct transferability predictions on those two indirectness strategies. How can we account for this phenomenon for this particular situation? Despite the obvious difference in proficiency and length of residence, both High ESL and Low ESL learners might happen to experience the same (and insufficient) amount of exposure to an L2 request situation similar to the 'Flute' situation in this study. In other words, the same degree of familiarity with the target situational context perceived by those learners assumed to yield the agreement tendency in their transferability assessment. This suggests that a familiarity factor could override such factors as linguistic proficiency and length of residence in the target-language

community (see Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986 and Bodman & Eisenstein, 1988 for their similar claim on 'learners' familiarity with the target contexts' in expressing gratitude in L2). However, it goes without saying that some empirical evidence should be obtained before making a conclusive claim on the effects of contextual familiarity in pragmatic transferability.

Implications for Takahashi and DuFon (1989)

One of the aims of the current study was to explicate the tendency which the Japanese learners of English presented regarding the indirectness strategies for the particular communicative contexts provided in Takahashi and DuFon (1989). Specifically, the Japanese learners of English in Takahashi and DuFon employed almost exclusively the indirectness strategies represented by the 'Want' statement ('I would like') and the 'Willingness' question ('Would you'). The present study then examined, through Hypotheses 1 and 2, whether those two L1 indirectness strategies really manifested language-neutral nature and were predicted as transferable from L1 to L2 contexts. The relevant answer to this issue is that the transferabilities of those two strategies are primarily determined by contextual factors (see the previous discussion section of **Indirectness Strategies and their Transferabilities**). However, the following tendency observed in the current study should be noted here. With regard to the 'Flute' and 'Questionnaire' situations, which were examined in Takahashi and DuFon (the 'Violin' situation in their study for the current 'Flute' situation), results similar to those of their study were obtained. That is, for the 'Flute' situation, it was found that the strategy of 'Would you,' which was frequently employed by the Japanese ESL learners in Takahashi and DuFon, was relatively transferable from L1 to L2. On the other hand, for the 'Questionnaire' situation, the strategy of 'I would like,' which was favored by the Japanese learners of English in the earlier study, was found to be relatively transferable.

The current study, however, revealed the following as well: The strategies of 'I wonder' and 'I appreciate' were also likely to manifest language-neutral nature; and thus a greater degree of their being transferable from Japanese to English was predictable. A question arises here as to why most Japanese learners of English in Takahashi and DuFon did not equally use those two strategies in their L2. In fact, only one subject (out of nine) relied on the strategy of 'I wonder' for the two situations examined in their study.

A possible explanation would be that the strategies of 'I would like' and 'Would you' were relatively automatized in their speech act performance in English. Thus those two indirectness strategies were far more likely to be available to them

under the psychological pressure which they must have experienced in the role-play data-eliciting conditions adopted by Takahashi and DuFon. Contrary to those two automatized strategies, the strategies of 'I wonder' and 'I appreciate' might have been insufficiently automatized in the subjects' L2. In other words, their processing mechanism in performing English requests using those two strategies was still immature and could not function in an appropriate manner. To use Bialystok's (1982, 1988) model of two dimensions of language proficiency, the 'immaturity' here can be specified as follows: The learners could analyze the strategies of 'I wonder' and 'I appreciate' as having requestive forces but did not attain fluent access to that information or knowledge. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that, in their role play performance, the strategies of 'I wonder' and 'I appreciate' were not (or less likely to be) employed. It should be noted here that, in the current study, such automaticity in English request performance was not required because the five indirectness strategies examined here were prepared by the researcher, and the subjects were just asked to rate their acceptabilities. This methodological advantage for the subjects in the current study might have provided them with more opportunity or time to assess the acceptability of each indirectness strategy, i.e., including the strategies of 'I wonder' and 'I appreciate' (cf. Edmondson & House (1991)). In sum, the findings of the current study lead us to realize the crucial and essential difference existing between production under real-time conditions and receptive pragmatic judgment (as represented by the acceptability judgment in this study) and provide a base for exploring the nature of processing constraints in real-time conditions, a still neglected issue in interlanguage pragmatics.

CONCLUSION

In the current study, an effort was made to investigate the nature of transferability at the pragmatic level. In so doing, the transferabilities of five indirectness strategies of request were examined and interpreted. The overall results showed that a given strategy was language-neutral and transferable for a certain request context but not for other contexts. Or some indirectness strategies were L1- or L2-specific and predicted as being non-transferable for given contexts, but these same strategies were found to be transferable for other request situations. Since the variables of interlocutors' familiarity and gender and a requestee's social status were strictly controlled in the current study, some contextual factors other than the above variables seem to play a major role in determining the transferabilities of those indirectness strategies. Those contextual

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factors may include the content of the situations and/or request imposition. On the whole, however, at this stage of research in this area, what kind of or which contextual factors most affect pragmatic transferability is hard to decide. In fact, various factors must be taken into account whenever this type of research is conducted--the relationship of the interlocutors in a given situation (e.g., familiarity, status difference/equal, gender difference/equal, age difference/equal), the position of request realization in the discourse (e.g., a pre-request performed at the beginning of the discourse versus an overt request made in a requestor's next turn),[8] the content of the situation (e.g., requests for the 'first-time around' versus 'second-time around'), and the request imposition manifested through the content of the situations. In particular, as discussed earlier in the strategy of 'I wonder,' it is highly conceivable that the request imposition would affect transferability of each indirectness strategy to a great extent. Failure to investigate this point in this study surely compels us to conduct further research.[9] The variables attributable to subjects, such as gender, age, and proficiency, must also be investigated thoroughly. In particular, as an immediate study, the proficiency effect on transferability, which was found to be a controversial factor against the effect of familiarity with a target situational context, should be further pursued in a more systematic manner. It is expected that those future studies on pragmatic transferability will enable us to help L2 learners develop their awareness of the potential illocutionary force of any conventional speech act form in the target language.

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NOTES

[1] According to Sharwood Smith and Kellerman (1989), there are three stages which characterize the U-shaped behavior in language performance. At Stage 1, learners tend to show target like performance in some limited linguistic domain. Stage 2 is characterized by performance in this same area which is now deviant (in terms of omission or commission) as compared to the target model and thus different from performance at Stage 1. At Stage 3, those structures present in Stage 1 but to some extent suppressed in Stage 2 appear again.

[2] For the convenience of the reader, the labeling system different from that employed in Takahashi (1987) is used for those nine indirectness levels. For the labeling of each indirectness level in Takahashi (1987), see Appendix A.

[3] Takahashi (1987) established the taxonomy based on Leech's (1980, 1983) Tact Maxim. Briefly, the taxonomy is interpreted in the following manner in the case of directives (i.e., requests) with the forms of 'You should open the window' ('Expectation' statement - Second level), 'Will you open the window?' ('Willingness' question - Third level), and 'Can you open the window?' ('Ability' question - Fourth level).

The directive 'Will you open the window?' (Third level) is more tactful than the directive 'You should open the window' (Second level) since its yes/no question form overtly allows the hearer to have freedom of response, i.e., the freedom to say 'yes' or 'no,' according to his/her 'will' or 'desire' to do the requested action. With this directive, however, the hearer does have some difficulty answering, 'No, I won't,' because such a negative answer will make him/her appear uncooperative and unwilling to carry out his/her part of the interaction. To put it another way, the freedom to refuse is not perfectly guaranteed to the hearer. In this sense, the directive 'Can you open the window?' (Fourth level) is more tactful than 'Will you open the window?' in that the speaker gives the hearer the freedom to refuse because the negative answer can be justified by the inability on the part of the hearer to do the desired action.

The Tact Maxim claims a positive correlation between tactfulness and indirectness, i.e., the more tactful forms are more indirect. Hence, in the above, 'Will you open the window?' (Third level) is more indirect than 'You should open the window' (Second level) but less indirect than 'Can you open the window?' (Fourth level). Note here that **indirectness** as a result of **tactfulness** does not necessarily correlate with **politeness** (see also Blum-Kulka, 1987). As Leech (1980) claims, the utterance 'Would you mind leaving the room?' is a tactful attempt to avoid conflict, but can be extremely impolite on certain occasions. Hence, Takahashi's taxonomy of indirectness excludes the notion of politeness.

Also note that this taxonomy is a purely theoretically motivated attempt and some empirical support remains to be obtained. Furthermore, it is also relevant here to note that this taxonomy is only effective between English and Japanese directives and may not be applicable to English-Korean or Japanese-Chinese comparisons of indirect directives, as opposed to the claim of Fraser (1975) on the universal strategies for realizing speech acts.

[4] The difference in the mean TOEFL scores between those two proficiency groups was found to be significant ($t = -6.691$, $p < .0001$). Hence, it can be claimed that the cut-off point for the TOEFL scores in creating the two groups in this study marked a real difference between the groups.

[5] The familiarity factor was specified in the instructions of the acceptability rating task, which was attached to each questionnaire, instead of being specified in each request situation. The subjects were informed of the degree of familiarity with their neighbor as the extent to which they say hello to her whenever they see her.

[6] In the corresponding 'Violin' situation in Takahashi (1987) and Takahashi and DuFon (1989), the situation was described in a way that a requestor must ask her next-door neighbor to change 'her daughter's violin practice time.' In this study, however, due to an advantage for providing a uniform format for the questionnaire-filling-out instruction (applicable to all of the four situations), the form of asking the next-door neighbor to change 'her own practice time' was taken.

[7] The situation-based data analysis was done because the four situations could not be collapsed for the following four reasons. First, this study was expected to provide an account for the observed tendency that the Japanese learners of English in Takahashi and DuFon (1989) favored particular levels of indirectness. Since Takahashi and DuFon followed a 'situation-based' data analysis, it was advisable to proceed in the same way in this study. Second, the 'content' of each situation was judged to manifest different degrees of imposition on the requestee. While status, familiarity, and gender of interlocutors were strictly controlled, imposition could thus be an intervening variable. Third, the Japanese request sentences in the 'Flute,' 'Questionnaire,' and 'Airport' situations contained the honorific auxiliary verb *itadaku*, whereas the honorific auxiliary verb *morau* was used in the 'Moving Car' situation. Since these two auxiliary verbs are different in their degree of politeness, honorifics could thus constitute another intervening variable. Fourth, in view of the operational definition of transferability and the entailed interpretation scheme for this study, it was judged that a situation-based data analysis could yield a more precise picture of the transferability of indirectness strategies in requesting.

[8] The factor of the position of request realization in the discourse (a pre-request versus an overt request made in a requestor's next turn) is currently being examined in my doctoral dissertation research.

[9] The factor of request imposition is currently being studied in my doctoral dissertation research.

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